

# THE WHY OF THE WILL

## The Unity of the Universe

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F. W. VAN PEYMA, M.D.

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THE UNITY OF THE UNIVERSE

BY

P. W. VAN PEYMA, M. D.

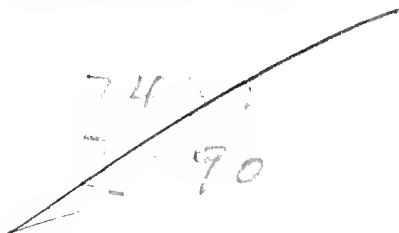


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“Man cannot, as a rational being, do otherwise than endeavor by the investigation of the whole phenomena of the case, to verify, analyze, combine and co-ordinate his notions as to spiritual things so as to work them up into a comprehensive, consistent, firmly established, adequately certified, naturally organized whole.”

REV. ROBERT FLINT, D. D. LL. D.  
*Professor of Divinity,*  
*University of Edinburgh.*



## PREFACE

The views presented in the following pages have been held by the writer for many years. They constitute the result of long and earnest thought, in a sincere and reverent search for truth. Distinct and vivid is the recollection of the origin of the fundamental thought.

Nearly forty years ago, one warm summer day, while resting in serene and meditative ease, thinking thoughts and weaving fancies with the fresh creativeness of youth, suddenly there came the mental picture, the clear and definite conception, of the necessarily determined nature of human thoughts and human actions. Further thought, and some acquaintance with the literature of the subject, has confirmed, as well as elaborated, the original conception. In questions, such as that of the "freedom of the will," so-called, the quiet, unbiased thought of a well trained and fairly intelligent mind, is of more value than is extensive reading.

That a question so old, so absolutely fundamental, and as is believed, essentially so clear, should continue to be a subject of conflicting views, may well appear strange. In the opinion of the writer, the reasons for this unsettled state are to be found in two general facts: the first, a mistaken interpretation of self-consciousness;

## PREFACE

and the second, certain general preconceptions of a dogmatic nature, varying somewhat according to the individual and the sect. Attempts by various writers to reconcile the testimony of reason and of real consciousness, with various dogmatic preconceptions, have resulted in artificial obscurity and needless confusion.

The reader's open-minded and deliberate consideration is invited to what constitutes or makes up full consciousness in the matter of freedom or determination. Particular attention is also called to the views regarding the relation of determinism to the subject of responsibility and fatalism, and to ethics and moral progress and development.

That in all discussions we must ever recognize the limitations of finite understanding, needs no argument. It is clearly idle to attempt to go "beyond the beginning of knowledge." We must accept the "ultimate and inexplicable facts of human nature." We should, also, never forget that there is no proportion, no commensuration between things finite and infinity. Infinity as seen in eternity, immensity and absolute energy is plainly beyond our finite conception.

"Measure not with words Th' Immeasurable,  
"Nor sink the string of thought into the Fathomless.

. . . "Who asks doth err, who answers, errs."

## PREFACE

The question of the personality of the Deity is not entered into, and the terms Creator, eternal power, forces of nature, and primal cause are employed practically interchangeably.

The discussion of many subjects more or less allied to the main thought, such as individualism, phenomenalism, the nature of energy and matter, the essential nature of mind, and its relation to the brain, has been omitted as not directly relevant and as tending to distract from the main line of argument. These and similar questions bear no direct and necessary relation to the main thought. Many of them, also, are believed to be absolutely beyond the mental grasp of finite beings. The attempts of certain transcendentalists to solve these and similar problems seem somewhat like the efforts of a microscopist, who, in his eagerness to see more and better, is not satisfied with that which a perfect focus gives him, but pushes the lens a little nearer, and gets the obscurity of dispersive rays.

The fact that finite knowledge is never absolute, but is necessarily limited to an understanding of the relation of things, is by many not rarely ignored. The distinction between things, that in some of their extensions go beyond our knowledge, and those that in their very essence are directly opposed to reason, is, also, not infrequently overlooked.

## PREFACE

In the course of the argument many illustrations have been taken from the inorganic world and from physiology, but it does not follow that the interpretations imply the "dreadful dogma" of materialism. To the main question the concept of spiritualism or of materialism is irrelevant, and the argument for determinism admits of either postulate. Whether the mind is a product of the brain, or the brain simply the organ of the mind, does not affect the question.

And yet it will undoubtedly be found true, that persons who are somewhat familiar with the essential truths of physiology, especially with those relating to the nervous system, will more readily follow many of the arguments, as well as find them more convincing.

The fact that belief in the independence, in the "freedom" of human activities, and of the human will, is held so generally by the masses, is, of course, not convincing as an argument. The history of the world is replete with instances of the abandonment of beliefs that were once generally accepted. Besides, in all ages many thoughtful minds have maintained, to the contrary, that our actions are determined.

The difficulty of finding language to clearly and exactly express one's views, is recognized by all writers on philosophical subjects. To

## PREFACE

find the exact words to express a definite thought, is not alone, frequently difficult, but, on account of the many-sided character and uses of words, they often express too much, or something different than is intended. The writer has, therefore, many times employed, perhaps tautologically, several words to express a single idea. Also, he has used the same words and phrases repeatedly, sacrificing rhetoric to clearness. While it is quite possible, that, occasionally, there may occur an expression that is open to the criticism of ambiguity, yet, it is believed, that, taking the argument as a whole, the meaning is distinct and obvious.

If sometimes the expressions may seem too positive and authoritative, there is certainly no intention to be dogmatic. If the reader will simply mentally add to any such expressions, "in the opinion of the writer," he will get the spirit intended, and will insert that which, too frequently repeated, would have interrupted and marred the text. As Sydney Smith was wont to say: "When I say that a thing is so, I mean that I think it is so."

In describing certain physiological processes, the desire and intent to be very brief have sometimes resulted in stating the fact incompletely as to detail. Since, however, more complete description would not have changed the nature or

## PREFACE

the force of the illustration, but would have lessened the directness of the argument, the technical omission subserves a useful purpose.

The writer has written what he believes, what he has believed a long while, and what he believes worth while. He hopes that the thoughts will be read in a spirit as earnest and sincere as that which has prompted their writing. A subject so profoundly important merits serious, intelligent and unprejudiced consideration.



# THE WHY OF THE WILL

## THE UNITY OF THE UNIVERSE

### I

Science is based upon the uniformity, the invariability, of the processes, the manifestations of nature. There is law in the universe. Where like conditions exist, like results obtain. Antecedent and consequent are in everlasting relation. It is the persistence of attributes, of inherent qualities, that makes knowledge possible, and without it there could be no knowledge.

As a general proposition this is so clearly recognized that it is accepted without argument. And yet, it appears that in one department of human inquiry, this otherwise universally admitted fact is questioned. It is maintained by some, that in the operations of the human mind, including the will, this otherwise universal law finds an exception.

It is undeniable that the more common conception of human actions is that they are either wholly, or, at least to some extent, independent of law, that they are erratic, capricious, "free," "spontaneous."

On the other hand, there have always been thinkers, who, from time to time, have maintained that the operations of the mind—delib-

eration and volition included—are subject to the same laws of uniformity and necessity, as are all the other phenomena of nature;—have maintained, in fact, that psychology may be truly a science.

Beside the persons entertaining these opposite views, there is a third group, composed of those who believe that the question of the “freedom of the will,” so-called, is an insoluble philosophical or psychological puzzle.

It seems improbable that a question so basic to the conception of moral responsibility should be beyond the understanding of man. The present article is written in the belief, that it can be shown that the subject is essentially clear, and that the trouble in understanding arises from preconception and prejudice, from apprehension of supposed moral and religious consequences; and from a superficial, non-critical and imperfect conception of consciousness.

In the inorganic world confidence in the uniformity of nature is unquestioned. It is seen when the chemist, relying upon the known properties of certain chemicals, in bringing them together confidently looks forward to certain definite reactions. The conditions being given, he predicts the resulting reaction with positive assurance. The conditions or circumstances being the same, the result is the same one time as an-

other. And this result is recognized as involved in the inherent properties of the chemicals employed. When, for example, nitric acid and a definite solution of bicarbonate of soda are mixed, the equation which expresses the interaction and the result is definite and positive.

So, also, the physicist, in heating a mass of iron a certain number of degrees, obtains a definite amount of expansion. And if he continues the application of heat, he knows that at a certain temperature the iron will melt. And this result is the same one day as another. If he reproduces the conditions he repeats the result. With the positiveness of mathematics he calculates in advance the power of a steam or an electric engine; and this positiveness depends upon the known and unchanging attributes of the agents employed.

The astronomer, assured of "the fixed arithmetic of the universe," computes the orbits of the heavenly bodies. If a discrepancy is discovered between the computation and actual observation, he reviews his figures. If his calculation is found to be without error, he concludes the existence, and searches for the, as yet, undiscovered stellar body which will explain the deviation. He, also, never for a moment, doubts the immutability of the laws of nature.

In the organic world, too, the botanist, the

#### 4 THE WHY OF THE WILL

horticulturist, the physiologist entertain the same confidence in the uniformity of the processes of nature. "The sesamum was sesamum, the corn was corn." An acorn gives an oak, a rosebush yields roses. The seed, the soil, the season being good, the agriculturist confidently predicts the crop. If occasionally he fails in his expectations, he questions not the unvarying character of the laws of nature, but searches for some hitherto unrecognized factor. Here, again, is a recognition of inherent properties, of unvarying attributes. Here, also, like conditions bring like results.

And so in the animal kingdom we find exemplified the same principle of uniformity, of invariability. In fact, in their lowest and simplest forms plants and animals are often difficult to distinguish. The ordinary physical, chemical and metabolic characteristics and activities which serve to distinguish the higher animals and plants, here show innumerable exceptions, transitions, and even complete reversals. Thus among fungi and in many saprophytic and parasitic forms of vegetable life, we have variations in metabolism which simulate those found in animals. The absence of chlorophyll in certain plants produces similar variation.

On the other hand, in the direct imbibition of

nourishment, as seen in certain animal parasites, we have a process usually considered characteristic of vegetable life. Similar connecting links are seen in insectivorous plants and in sponges and corals. It is claimed also that cellulose and chlorophyl are occasionally products of certain lower animals.

In passing up the scale of both vegetable and animal life we observe increasing complexity of structure and function. But, through all this gradation, the physiological properties are essentially the same. Between the very lowest and the very highest, between the simplest and the most complex, there exists a gradational series, exemplified at every step; and the inherent properties of living tissue, of protoplasm, are found throughout the scale.

If by a "cell" we understand, simply a small mass of protoplasm, we may take an Amoeba as an example of a unicellular organism.

This little organism, with the very simplest structural constitution, possesses all the fundamental physiological, vital properties found only in a more differentiated form in the very highest. This minute mass of protoplasm, while it has, in the ordinary sense, no muscles, no nerves, no stomach, yet, may be said to be all nerves, all muscle, all stomach, since throughout its structure it possesses the functions of all of

## 6 THE WHY OF THE WILL

these. It has the contractility of muscle, the irritability of nerves and nerve centers, the powers of absorption and assimilation of food, of excretion and of reproduction; in fact, it has all the fundamental properties possessed by any living being.

The highest animals may be considered as combinations or associated groups of such cells, no longer all alike, but differentiated in structure and function; the morphological differentiation of structure corresponding to, and being based on, the principle of the physiological differentiation of labor. The development here is similar to that occurring in Society, where from a primitive state, in which every man is his own carpenter, shoemaker and farmer, there gradually develops a higher civilization, with increasing specialization and perfection of labor.

We have, then, in the higher and more complex organisms, nerves, muscles, glands, organs of the special senses, organs of reproduction. But all these higher organisms, including, even, the most complex of all—the human being—are derived by a process of multiplication and differentiation from a single cell.

A microscopic cell, the ova-sperm, derived by fusion from the two sexual cells, the ovum and the spermatozoon, is the morphological and potential beginning of man.

In this reproduction of the species, in this beginning as a single cell, the very highest and the very lowest forms of life are alike. In the lowest forms this power of reproduction is not specialized. All parts of the organism possess this power, and no special stimulus seems to be required to excite its activity. In the higher, this power of reproduction is specialized in certain organs, and a stimulus derived from another individual of the opposite sex, is required. In the lower forms, the little mass simply throws off a portion of its body, which thereby becomes a separate individual. In the higher forms, the fusion of cells from opposite sexes is a prerequisite to reproduction. But, between these asexual and sexual forms of reproduction, we find a most interesting, important and instructive series of gradations. Some organisms, having been asexual, become in later generations sexual, and may then revert to the asexual type. Sometimes every alternate generation is reversed. Then, again, we have organisms where the bodies still remain attached, in a way that leaves the question open, whether they are really separate individuals, more or less attached to each other, or whether it is one individual with numerous feeding, ocular, locomotor and generative attachments. There is reason for believing that in Hydrozoa evolu-

## 8 THE WHY OF THE WILL

tion has brought about a gradual change, and that "many buds which now remain attached, as organs of the parent, formerly became early disconnected as free individuals, in turn developing the characteristics of adults."

In every possible way nature emphasizes the transitional, the evolutionary relation of the higher to the lower forms.

In its development the ova-sperm becomes by a process of cleavage or division, called multiplication or segmentation, a group of cells. These cells, which in the course of a single week's development have come to number millions, at first appear uniform, but rapidly become modified in structure and limited in function. It is thus that homogeneity gives way to heterogeneity, and that we have built up the various tissues of the body, the connective tissues, the bone, muscles, nerves, glands, etc.

The human embryo, in its development from the unicellular stage, passes through many stages exemplifying the fully developed growth of lower forms of life. Very early, there is the tubular or vermiform stage. Later occurs the development of gills or branchia, like those of a fish, and so on. In the early wormlike stage the human embryo is a simple tube composed of three concentric layers of cells,—an inner, middle and outer. Of these layers the inner con-



stitutes the intestinal canal,—the digestive tract,—with its later diverticula, the lungs, the liver, etc.; the middle develops into the framework of the body,—the bones, ligaments, muscles, etc.; while it is from the outer layer,—the one in contact with the outside world, that are derived all the structures and organs which later enable us to recognize our environment,—that is to say, the nervous system and the organs of the special senses.

In its fundamental steps, the development of the nervous system and the organs of the special senses is very simple. And it is as interesting, instructive and suggestive as it is simple.

The outer layer of cells develops two parallel longitudinal ridges extending along the dorsal surface of the embryo. As a result of their continued growth, the intervening furrow deepens. This process continues until finally the opposite ridges fold over, meet and coalesce, converting the furrow into a complete canal, extending along what is now the vertebral region. The enclosing wall thickens, the cephalic end enlarges to become the brain, the remainder becomes the spinal cord.

All the nerves of the body are branches of this original nerve mass. The organs of the special senses are likewise derived from the outer layer of cells, in part directly, in part

## 10 THE WHY OF THE WILL

from the previously involuted cerebro-spinal tube.

The sympathetic or organic nervous system, consisting of a series of nerve ganglions with connecting trunks, is also derived from and remains connected with, the cerebro-spinal system. It presides over organic life, and its activities are involuntary, and normally unconscious.

In the Amœba, the whole mass shows nervous irritability. In the tubular organism with its three coats or cell walls, only the outer is distinctly nervous. In the higher animals, we have the nervous irritability limited to the special nerve centers and branches, just referred to.

But, whether the nervous tissue be generally diffused or localized, and whether the irritation and the appropriate response be direct and immediate, as in the lower forms, or indirect by means of the nerve trunks leading to and from the nerve centers, as in the higher organisms, the essential nature of the process is the same. And this is equally true whether the irritant is from without, or is one developed within the body. In these processes the nerves are the carriers of the impulse to and from the nerve centers. Somewhat like the wires of an electric battery, they carry the current back and forth. Those carrying the impulse to the centers are called sensory or afferent nerves, while those

transmitting the impulse from the centers to the periphery are called motor or efferent nerves.

If one of the lower organisms, possessing no particular differentiation of structure, as, for example, an Amoeba, is mechanically or otherwise irritated, there results an explosion of stored-up, latent nervous energy. This energy set free, taking to a very large extent the form of motion, is directly proportioned in quantity, as well as determined in character, by the form and intensity of the irritant or stimulant, and the inherent nature and actual state of the organism. The two factors of organism and environment determine the exact and inevitable result.

A similar definite physiological process occurs in the case of the higher organisms possessing definite nervous and muscular systems. Here the stimulation or irritation experienced is transmitted by the afferent or sensory nerves to the nerve center, and there transformed, in some way, into a resulting motor impulse, which is sent along the efferent or motor nerves to the corresponding muscle or muscles.

This action, in its simplest form, is called a purely reflex act. Its nature, also, depends upon the nature of the factors involved; in other words, upon the character of the stimu-

## 12 THE WHY OF THE WILL

lant and the constitution of the organism. The interaction of these two factors determines the result. These being given, the result is determined.

Even in the case of vertebrata, possessing a cerebro-spinal nervous system, many of the reflex activities are limited to the spinal cord and its appropriate nerves, and do not involve the brain. The well known physiological experiments with the headless frog illustrate this fact. It is generally admitted that in these spinal reflex acts, there is no option or choice of action. The result here, also, is determined by the nature of the factors involved. In fact, a noted physiologist has aptly expressed this fact, in saying that every part of the central nervous ganglion responds as definitely as a key struck brings forth its appropriate sound.

In all the instances reviewed the result is definite and positive; and with the conditions given, could not be otherwise. The only way to obtain a different result would be to change one or both of the factors involved.

To generalize the foregoing conclusion, we may say, that a nerve cell whose properties are represented by A, in circumstances represented by B, receiving an impulse C, will give the efferent result D. The properties of any substance remaining constant, the variety of changes

which it undergoes will depend on variations in its environment,—on the impulses which the substance receives. The environment remaining constant, any diversity of change or interaction will depend on variation in the substance. Both remaining constant, the changes or activities are necessarily constant. Similar substances, in the same or similar conditions, must act alike. The substance has no choice or option. Its action or behavior is determined by the reaction between its inherent properties and the impulses it receives from its environment.

It is sometimes maintained that all forms of nervous activity involve consciousness. In the purely reflex acts, however, consciousness, if present, is of a vague and indefinite kind; and it is certain that in all these acts there is no conscious volition and no deliberation.

There remain for consideration the more complex reflex nervous activities, involving in their circuit the higher nerve centers of the brain. Here consciousness is definite, and a certain phase of it now receives the name volition or "will." To a certain extent this cerebral process is common to all the higher animals. No one disputes that the higher animals possess consciousness, nor that they manifest volition.

However, it is in the human being that this

## 14 THE WHY OF THE WILL

process attains its highest form. The cerebral activities usually comprised in this process, are generally designated as Sensation, Perception and Ideation. In other words, the stimulus transmitted to the brain results in consciousness, a recognition of the nature of the stimulus, and a train of thought having reference to the relation existing between the stimulus, or its source, and the individual. When this occurs, and when, after some thought or deliberation, the nature of the impulse received and its relation to the person have been given consideration, and when, finally, an appropriate impulse is returned by means of the efferent nerves, the act is then said to be conscious, intelligent, voluntary, purposive.

To what degree all this is true of animals in general, need not enter into the discussion. It is certainly true of human beings.

Neither is there need, here, to enter into a review of the anatomy or histology of the brain; nor is it important to discover which part or convolution of the brain is involved. It is not the exact locality, but the real nature of the process which is of interest in this connection.

For this is the process, which by many is claimed to be *not* subject to the nature of the factors involved, not determined, at least not wholly, by the quality and intensity of the im-

pulse or stimulus and the character and state of the nerve cells. It is maintained, that, in some way, this conscious, intelligent, volitional act is undetermined, is independent, is "*free*." Also, that no matter what the train of thought, as excited by the sensory impulse, may be, a certain something, called the "Will," may and frequently does, in spite of all reasoning decide arbitrarily, without any dependence upon or reference to the circumstances of the case; that, in other words, the constitution of the organism or individual and the nature of the stimulant, impulse or argument, are not factors which control and determine the result. And in attempts to explain this erratic, unrelated, undetermined action, the "Will," the "Soul," "Spirit," "Personality," are variously invoked.

And it is further maintained, that, no matter what arguments, more or less specious, or even logical and convincing, may be adduced, appearing to prove the proposition of determinism, one is still *conscious*, to the contrary, that he can do as he will,—that he is "*free*."

Right here, it is of primary importance to learn, so far as we may, what actually takes place in an act involving consciousness, deliberation and volition.

As has been stated, there is a sense in which it may be said that every impulse received by

## 16 THE WHY OF THE WILL

a living being excites a form of consciousness. But here there is reference to a clearer and more definite consciousness,—namely, that which expresses the impressions received by the brain, and there exciting certain activities.

Certain impressions are received, resulting, it may be, in the recognition of a state of one's body, or of environment, and having a bearing on one's well-being. A train of thought is started, the subject matter is considered. After due deliberation a decision as to the appropriate efferent impulse is arrived at, and a definite action is taken.

Conceive of any action, deliberative and voluntary in its nature; one in which the "Will" is recognized as active. A choice of action is presented to the mind; we consider, we weigh the various considerations or arguments, we determine which, to our mind, are the weightier, which overbalance or preponderate, and we make our decision. While the process of deliberation is in progress, additional arguments continue to occur. Some tend to influence in one direction; others in other directions. During this time we feel ourselves unsettled, undetermined, the question of ultimate decision and action is in abeyance.

Finally, however, no additional arguments or considerations are received. We have deliber-



ated so far as our individual ability and the circumstances of our environment permit, and the time for decision has come. To determine, amid the many mutually reinforcing and mutually opposing influences and arguments, the final balance or preponderance, involves a process similar to that employed in the simplification of an algebraic equation, with the resulting determination of the value of  $X$ .

Of course, all arguments or influences are not of equal importance or weight, and it may happen that one overpowering argument, recognized as conclusive, determines the decision at once. It may, also, occasionally occur that one is temporarily quite evenly balanced, and unable, for the time being, to decide. Fortunately, in important matters, this state of indecision rarely continues for any considerable period. We are not constituted like the legendary ass, who being of absolutely symmetrical construction, and placed between two equidistant, and exactly similar bales of hay, starved to death because he could not decide from which bale to bite.

In considering the interacting circumstances and influences of environment and of individuality, it is self-evident that it must be the preponderance which determines the decision and the action. To maintain either of the two other

possible conceptions: that it is an exact balance or equipoise, or that it is the weaker or lesser of the influences which controls, is, of course, unthinkable, absurd, a contradiction of language and of thought.

We take note of the preponderance of argument in any particular case, and we decide in accordance with this preponderance. Did we decide differently, it would be similarly and equally for a sufficient and predominating reason; even were it only to seem to ignore all ordinary reasons, and to appear to act free. This is, again, a definite reason, and one not infrequently influential and controlling.

The influences which result in the final decision need not be, and frequently are not, solely arguments appealing purely to the mind. The physical state of the individual, with its appetites, passions, inclinations and disinclinations, states of vigor, lassitude, health and sickness; with its ardor of youth and its conservatism and prudence of maturer years, has also its powerful influence, sometimes overruling, sometimes being overruled by, the more purely mental considerations. But whether the influences be corporal or mental, or both combined, it is necessarily the preponderance which controls and determines. An argument may be just as controlling as any physical influence or interaction;

as controlling, even, as compelling physical pressure or impulse.

Another essential fact to be observed, is that all the factors of the problem,—namely, the individual and the environing circumstances or conditions,—owe their particular existence, at any given moment, simply and wholly to the natural course or sequence of events. Their existence and their particular nature at any given time are in no sense accidental or fortuitous, but are, in reality, simply the expressions or results of a natural series of antecedent and consequent, of cause and effect.

The influences which affect and control us, including all arguments appealing to our minds, are based upon, and owe their existence to, these two facts of individuality and environment. All reasoning is founded upon and determined by them. The two essential points in the proposition of determinism are: first, that our thought and actions are determined by the circumstances of the moment, individual and environing; and, secondly, that these circumstances or conditions are but phenomena expressing the natural course of events; are but links in the endless chain of antecedent and consequent.

But, as has been stated, it is maintained by some that all arguments and influences, as well as all physical conditions, can be and frequently

are ignored and set aside, and that in these cases, the "Will" determines in some manner absolutely independent. We would thus have an act unrelated as to antecedent, an act absolute, and that by a finite creature.

As has been already observed, the usual argument offered in support of this view consists in an appeal to self-consciousness. It is contended, that, no matter how clear or how convincing the argument for determinism may be made to appear, still we are *conscious* of a power to decide "as we will," ignoring or overriding all arguments, all ordinarily influencing considerations.

There are still others, who, while recognizing the powerful control of circumstances and conditions, individual and environing, yet maintain, not that the "Will" is wholly "free," but still that it is so in part. And this amounts to the same thing, for it is here, really, only a question of determinism or independence. The argument for determinism is either true or false. If it is not wholly true, then it is, to some extent, false. Such an attempt at compromise settles nothing. It rests only with the opponents of determinism to show a single instance where an intelligent, volitional act is, in never so small a part, independent of and undetermined by the circumstances involved, and the case is theirs.

As has been pointed out, while we are delib-

erating, while arguments or considerations of any kind are still coming to the mind, or being evolved by it, and while these continue to modify our views, we feel ourselves in a state of abeyance and indecision, or, as some would express it, "free." Of this period of indecision we are conscious, and it would seem, that by many persons this temporary, evanescent first stage is mistaken for, and accepted as, the complete mental process. And the conclusion is that this settles the question in favor of the "freedom of the will."

But it will be noticed, that up to this time there has been no decision; no exercise of the "Will." And if we examine and study this mental process more carefully, more completely, it becomes clearly and convincingly evident that self-consciousness in this matter goes farther, and that, instead of stopping at the first step, it rounds out and concludes the process.

While it is true, that during the time that additional arguments and considerations continue to present themselves, we feel ourselves undecided, undetermined, yet, it is equally true, that when this flow of influences, individual and environing, ceases, we then take cognizance of the state of our mental balance, recognize the preponderance, and decide and act in accordance.

When at the conclusion of a definite deliber-

ation, a preponderance is recognized, when it is found that the mental scale or balance is turned in one or other direction, we are conscious of this our mental state; in other words, we *know* our decision. The "Will" is simply this consciousness, this *recognition* of preponderance, this *conscious* decision.

The "Will" is no entity. It is simply the *mental state*, in which we recognize a decision, a preponderance of influences; influences as they affect our individuality; and a preponderance that expresses a definite state of the individual mind at this particular moment, a mental state, in which we recognize the result of the interaction of our individuality and our environment; the necessary inevitable interaction of inherent properties.

This expresses the substance of our consciousness in a deliberative, voluntary act. To be convinced of the truth of this statement, one's examination of self-consciousness need only be full, fearless, and absolutely without bias or preconception.

As has already been observed, even if a perverse desire to appear to act contrary to the otherwise sensible, reasonable balance of influences, is the controlling motive, this means only, that the desire to appear "free," to appear unpredictable is the overwhelming and deciding consideration.

So, also, when one says, "I wanted to do one thing and did another," this simply means that there were considerations presented in favor of both sides of the question; that the person wanted, more or less, to do one as well as the other,—but, of course, it does not show, that it was the weaker influence or argument, or the total absence of arguments that decided. There was certainly a controlling reason for making the decision which was made, although there were, also, considerations which made the person feel that he would like to do something else. But, of course, one cannot do something and not do it at the same time. And the preponderance decides which it shall be.

Again, it is often asserted that we are conscious of doing as "we will." Probably no one disputes this. But it is equally true, that upon careful examination, we find that our willing is not alone always in accord with the facts of our individuality and our environment, but that it is naturally and necessarily so, and is, in reality, only a conscious expression of these facts. We will as we do, because we see and judge as we do. We are never conscious of deciding contrary to the real preponderance of influences. No more are we ever conscious of deciding absolutely without a reason.

A certain writer has said, that we believe our-

## 24 THE WHY OF THE WILL

selves free because we are conscious of our actions but not of their causes. Another has stated this truth paradoxically by saying, that we are conscious of being free in our willing, only when we are ignorant of the influences that control us.

The inherent attractions of chemical elements are no more controlling in determining their interactions, than are the equally inherent natures or affinities of living organisms. Even, though, in the higher species the interaction may be definitely *conscious*, and, though, in these we may name the inherent attraction or affinity "Will," this does not alter the essential nature of the interaction. And, conceiving chemical elements as having consciousness, we might with complete analogy speak of their interaction as expressing their will. And so, also, we might say of a physical scale or balance, that it wills to turn toward the side holding five pounds as against the side with only four pounds. The fact of consciousness or unconsciousness does not affect the certainty, the inevitableness of the result. The controlling determining factor, in each case, is the preponderance of influences. When the greater attraction or the preponderance of influences is *consciously* recognizable, we call the interaction or decision a voluntary decision,—a volitional act. But,



of course, a volition determined by influences or bound by reason, appetite or other circumstance is not independent, is not "free."

Physical properties, chemical affinities, organic attributes or natures, the behaviour and reactions of inorganic matter, nervous irritability, unconscious reflex responses and involuntary actions, and, finally, conscious, voluntary activities are all expressions of something inherent, immanent; something constant and determined.

Once more, then: the two determining factors are the individual and his environment. Their interaction gives the result. These given, the result is determined, is constant, invariable; is, even, sometimes predictable; and to an omniscient being would always be predictable. To a finite being the result is frequently, perhaps generally, unpredictable, but this is only because of the great number and variety of influences involved;—because of the complexity of the problem.

As an illustration: Conceive a man whose avarice is so great as to overbalance and control all other considerations. Such a man, when considering investments, will weigh the probabilities of greatest gain, and his decision will inevitably be in the line that his judgment decides his interests to lie. Here, even a finite

## 26 THE WHY OF THE WILL

mind might foresee the result. In ordinary individuals one consideration scarcely ever predominates to this extent, but here the controlling influences are but multiplied, the problem is more complex, the resultant more difficult to foresee, but no essentially different element enters into the case.

It is only by varying or changing one or both of the factors that the result can be changed. Alexander Bain makes clear the truth of this proposition in his well known illustration of the schoolboy. He says:

“The school boy whose animal spirits carry him to a breach of decorum, or whose anger has made him do violence upon a schoolfellow, will sometimes defend himself by saying that he was carried away and could not restrain himself. In other words, he makes out a case closely allied to physical compulsion. He is sometimes answered, by saying that he could have restrained himself, if he had chosen, willed, or sufficiently wished to do so. Such an answer is really a puzzle or paradox, and must mean something very different from what is apparently expressed. The fact is that the offender was in a state of mind, such that his conduct followed according to the uniformity of his being, and if the same antecedents were exactly repeated, the same consequences would be exactly reproduced. In that view, therefore, the foregoing answer is irrelevant, not to say nonsensical. The proper form and the practical

meaning to be conveyed, is this: It is true that as your feelings then stood your conduct resulted as it did, but I am now to deal with you in such a way, that, when the situation recurs, new feelings and motives will be present, sufficient, I hope, to issue differently. I now punish you or threaten you, or admonish you, in order that an antecedent motive may enter into your mind as a counteractive to your animal spirits, or temper, on another occasion, seeing, that, acting as you did, you were plainly in need of such a motive."

In the chapter on "Liberty and Necessity," the following occurs:

"When a person purchases an article out of several submitted to view, the recommendations of that one are said to be greater than of the rest, and nothing more needs really to be said in describing the transaction. It may happen that for a moment the opposing attractions are exactly balanced and decision suspended thereby. The equipoise may even continue for a length of time, but when the decision is actually come to, the fact and the meaning are, that some consideration has risen to the mind giving a superior energy of motive to the side that has preponderated."

The illustration just given answers also the common assertion, "I could have done differently than I did." The answer is simply: "Yes, you could, and you would have done differently, if the circumstances of your individuality or of

environment, or of both had been different. But it is also clear, that one cannot, at the same moment, prefer a certain article and not prefer it, or, in other words, prefer one article and prefer another.

To take another example: A traveller comes to a fork of the road. He can take either the road to the left or the one to the right. He hesitates, he deliberates. Finally, he decides upon and takes the road to the left. If he now says, "I could have taken the other road," what is the exact truth regarding this statement?

The facts are that the choice of roads presents itself to the mind of the traveller; both roads are open; both present certain attractions. But, since he cannot take both at the same time, it is a self-evident fact that if he is to go ahead, he is, in the very nature of things, obliged to decide which road it shall be. He takes the one which the balance of arguments causes him to prefer; and it is inconceivable, that, with the balance as it is, he should prefer or choose the other. To another person the road to the right might appear more attractive; and even the traveller who has chosen the road to the left might, at some other time prefer the one to the right; but in the latter case either the individual or the road or both would have to be different than they are at the moment when he

prefers the one to the left. It is to be further observed that the actual choice or decision is only the expression of the natural, essential interaction of the individual and his environment.

In this connection the question may also arise, as to what is the difference between an individual who is said to have a strong will and one whose will is regarded as weak. The difference is one of individual disposition, and is somewhat similar to the difference between a feather and a stone. The one is moved by every current and counter-current, while the other is much less easily moved, but being moved, its momentum is also less easily overcome. Strength of will, so-called, may be an admirable quality, as seen, for example, in devotion to high ideals, but it is also not infrequently an indication of, and a synonym for, conceit, selfishness and arrogance.

To deny that our actions are determined by the interaction of our individuality and our environment, and to maintain, to the contrary, that they are independent or "free," even to the slightest degree, is to assert, that, to that extent, at least, we act without an adequate cause or reason, or, what amounts to the same, contrary to the preponderance of the sum total of the influences. It is to contend that to some extent, at least, even if not wholly or always, our

### 30 THE WHY OF THE WILL

acts may be unrelated as to antecedent, may be absolute.

To finite creatures all knowledge is but a recognition and an understanding of relations. Absolute knowledge is not given to us, is not even conceivable. An absolute act or fact, be it the "Will" or anything else, is to finite minds incomprehensible. The human mind, especially if logical and scientific, is not satisfied with a simple recognition of fact. It is eager to know the relation of this fact to other facts. The desire and effort to know the reason of things are universal and unquenchable. Man is not satisfied until he has found an answer to the ever-recurring "Why?" And the present discussion as to "the Why of the Will" is but a renewed testimony to the truth of this general affirmation.

In all discussions it is absolutely essential to recognize our finiteness. Infinity, be it God, eternity or space is not given to mortal man to conceive. The proposition of the absolutely unrelated, undetermined human will is not alone *opposed to* but is absolutely *beyond* the possibility of human conception. It is, of course, impossible to think of any act as without effect. It is equally impossible to think of any act as without antecedent; that is, to think of it as absolutely unrelated to all and everything preced-

ing it. Of a state of mind, of the will, for example, it would be saying that it came of itself out of nothing.

To say that we will simply *because* we will is to assert that our willing is pure happening, pure chance, and, though there may be found persons who maintain such a belief, still, even these will scarcely deny, that every volition or act of willing implies, and must necessarily have, a purpose. It is clear, also, that there can be no purpose without something to which this purpose refers; and, further, that the conception of this object must precede or antedate the formation of the purpose. Every volition or act of willing involves an antecedent conception. The volition is based upon, and extended from, this antecedent conception by a process of reasoning; and the course of reasoning is determined by the inherent nature of the circumstances, subjective and environing.

The human "Will" is no exception to the uniformity of nature, nor to the interdependence of its phenomena. Human acts simply fall in with the natural sequence of events. In things material the sway of natural law is universally recognized.

"The unseen things are more, men's hearts and minds,  
The thoughts of peoples and their ways and wills,  
Those, too, the great Law binds."

## 32 THE WHY OF THE WILL

Man is a scale or balance, conscious and intelligent, conscious of recognizing the preponderance and conscious of being determined by, and of deciding according to, this preponderance. In this connection, it is interesting to note that the word "deliberate" is derived from the latin "libra" a balance. To deliberate is to weigh, to ponder in the balance of the mind.

The acts which involve definite consciousness, intelligence and volition appear to be as much determined or necessitated by the nature of the factors of individuality and environment, as are those of the lowest organisms. And, likewise, in the higher animals we find that, in this respect, also, the purely reflex activities of the spinal cord and the deliberative, volitional activities are alike. In the latter we are conscious of the interaction involved, and feel the preponderance which determines the result. In the former we are very generally unconscious of the process. In the one case the inherent qualities of the factors necessitate the result. In the other, also, this is true, only here consciousness is added, the mind recognizes the interaction of influences and the final preponderance. Our mental state when recognizing this preponderance we call "the Will."

A connecting link between these two varieties of nervous activity is found in the class some-



times called automatic, meaning thereby those purposive nervous activities, which at first conscious, become gradually, as the result of frequent repetition, practically unconscious or sub-conscious. Learning to walk; learning to play a musical instrument; in fact, learning to do almost anything well, will serve as illustrations. Here, also, belong the thousand and one little daily activities, neither, on the one hand, purely reflex, nor, on the other, involving any definite deliberation. It is especially in this class of activities that the causes of action are generally unrecognized. But, while we may, in these cases, be ordinarily quite unconscious of the causative influences involved, yet a thoughtful analysis, based on a knowledge of physiological and psychological principles, discloses their existence. It is, especially, to this class of common, everyday activities that the remark applies, that "we believe ourselves free only because we are conscious of our actions and not of their causes."

But this is true only in the absence of intelligent analysis. The greater the intelligence, and the more careful the examination, the fuller will be the recognition.

According to the preceding argument, also, there is no escape in the common assertion that we can change the factors of individuality and

environment, and thus control the result. It is clear, that any such act would be of the same nature, and as much determined as any other. The matter would still be one of antecedent and consequent, would still be a case of natural and necessary sequence. When it is said of a person that "he has risen above his environment," it means simply that he has experienced a change of relation, the result of an interaction which has had an upward tendency. When the upward movement has been rapid, and when the causes are not very apparent, it is not, perhaps, surprising that it should, at times, be looked at as something spontaneous, something independent of the interplay of individuality and environment. That one should "rise above his environment" is no more strange than that another should "sink below it."

Strictly speaking, however, both statements are incorrect as to facts. The real fact is that both our individuality and environment are constantly changing, and with them, the relation of one to the other; and sometimes the interaction tends in one direction, sometimes in another.

There remains another argument which has a direct and important bearing on the question under discussion. Probably no one, whatever his views on other questions may be, will care to

maintain that at the time of his conception, or even of his birth into separate existence his "free will" was active in choosing or determining either his environment or his individuality. One may occasionally hear a fond parent, in acknowledging the good qualities of his children, humorously explain that they were careful in the choice of their parents. But, in general, parents will scarcely be inclined to assume such precocity on the part of their children.

Our individuality,—our characteristics and our potentiality,—and our environment, have been, in some way, determined for us at the time that we begin our earthly career.

At birth every child possesses certain characteristics, many, of course, wholly latent. His environment, also, is unique and particular to him. At any later time, the individual is but the child at birth plus his development. This development consists of his reactions with his environment.

The earlier activities of an infant, clearly lacking in full consciousness and in deliberation, are designated as instinctive, automatic, reflex, involuntary. Later they gradually become more conscious, more deliberative, more clearly volitional, more purposive. But neither physiology nor psychology furnishes us with any evidence that there is here shown any es-

sential change of nature. The change is simply one of gradual development. The earlier activities are clearly the expression of the interaction of the organism and its environment. The later activities, not less clearly dependent, differ chiefly in the gradual increase of influences appealing to, and acting through, the mind. The earlier involuntary differ from the later voluntary in that, in the latter, the determinism is conscious. That to this conscious determinism we give the name of "will," does not change the nature, nor the inevitable character of the act.

In the young infant the activities are predominantly vegetative or organic, and corresponding to this, the cerebro-spinal activities seem to have much in common with those of the organic or sympathetic nervous system.

In the natural sequence of events, both the individual and his environment are constantly changing. And this is true, not alone of living organisms, but, also, of the inorganic world,—of all nature. Disintegration and reintegration are constantly going on,—change everywhere and always. In all that has been said of the definite interaction of these two factors, it is, of course, understood that this is true of them at any given moment of their existence. Just before, and just after, a moment earlier,

or a moment later, the circumstances of individuality and of environment are different; although just as controlling, just as determined.

And each moment is connected with that preceding and that following as links in a natural chain of antecedent and consequent, leading back not alone to infancy, but back to ancestral life; and not alone to the third and fourth generations, but back beyond the stretch of finite imagination. So, also, a person looking back upon a life nearing its natural close, may recognize in the retrospect, the logical unfolding of the early tendencies of individuality and environment; may recognize how true is the saying that "the child is the father of the man."

Observing the uniformity, the immutability of the processes of nature, we recognize that each fact has its antecedent, and this again its own, and so on, until in retracing the processes we lose ourselves, after fewer or more steps, in the single universal cause. We lose ourselves in infinity, we recognize the manifestations, the workings of the eternal power,—in ourselves as well as in nature generally. And we know from history, human, geological and astronomical, that thus has nature manifested herself since time has recorded.

The universal energy works through us. We really originate nothing, we initiate nothing.

We originate no force or energy, any more in the world of mind and will, than in the world material. Since we have learned the fact of the correlation and the conservation of energy, we have ceased to waste our time and strength on the building of material "perpetual motions"; and, in due time, our fancy or imagination will also cease to occupy itself with the construction of the immaterial variety, as exemplified in the so-called "dominant Will."

We are agents in the hands of the Creator; instruments of the universal energy. Conscious instruments, intelligent agents, but controlled. Controlled both through the mind and the body. Foreordained, predestined in our every act, physical, chemical, vital, reflex, automatic, instinctive, intuitive, deliberative, volitional, purposive. The will of the Almighty is our will. We originate nothing, and when by our actions we modify anything, it is as links in the endless chain of nature's sequences. We are parts, or better said, phases of the eternal energy. And, as has been observed before, the interacting circumstances of individuality and environment which determine our actions, owe their existence, at any given moment, simply and wholly, to the natural course or sequence of events.

Now, while all this, in so far as it recognizes

infinity, is beyond our complete mental grasp, yet it is not *opposed* to finite reason. It transcends our limited intelligence in its depth and in its infinite relation. The "primal cause" we do not and cannot fully understand; and in our attempts to fathom it we lose ourselves, as already intimated, in the depths of the Unknowable. "Veil after veil will lift, but there must be veil upon veil behind." But to the existence of the universal enduring energy, all our consciousness testifies.

While many of the arguments for determinism are drawn from facts in the material world, and especially from those of physiology, it does not follow that the argument is, therefore, purely and wholly materialistic. That based upon self-consciousness certainly is not. The essential nature of human volition does not depend upon the question whether the mind is a product of the brain, a secretion as some have held, or whether the brain is simply an organ or instrument made use of by the mind, the "soul," the "spirit," the "personality." Even the acceptance of the latter view, does not settle the question of the nature of human actions—of their dependence or their independence. The question still remains open, and simply becomes one of the nature of this assumed presiding "spirit," "soul" or "personality." And the real

question is whether this "spirit" is something apart from, distinct and independent of the universal, eternal Energy, Soul, Spirit or "Person."

Is there unity, duality or multiplicity in the universe? Is there one force, or are there two or many? In addition to the all-pervading, enduring, unchanging energy, is there another, erratic, capricious, wilful, absolutely independent, essentially unpredictable? Or are there as many as there are human beings? In other words, are we all gods?

In the world's history it has not infrequently happened that the distinction between gods and men has become a little confused. Various human attributes, such as jealousy, capriciousness, vengeance, have been ascribed to deities; while, on the other hand, human beings have as commonly arrogated the supposed qualities and powers of gods.

In the question between a single pervading, enduring energy, and several independent energies, limited and erratic, it would seem, in view of the present state of intelligence, that the burden of proof rests with those who claim such a remarkable exception to the uniformity and the universality of the laws of nature, and where is the evidence that can establish a "reasoned and intelligent conviction" of such a pro-



position? "For all belief and faith we are bound to have real evidence, and enough of it."

Belief in the so-called "freedom of the will" is a relic and an inheritance of an unscientific past; an age of belief in devils and witches, in magic and miracles; in divine interpositions and special providences. But "as knowledge widens" we find "that the range of possibilities narrows until to perfect knowledge possibility is lost in necessity."

According to the preceding review, neither analogy nor consciousness supports such a proposition. Analogies from the inorganic and the organic world bear uniform witness against it. Chemical elements and living organisms speak against it; and consciousness adds its convincing testimony against it. Only a hasty and most superficial impression of a primary, temporary stage of self-consciousness has been supposed to lend support; but upon closer, deeper examination and understanding, also consciousness disproves it.

There exists no contradiction between immediate consciousness and reason. The mind is not in contradiction with itself. It would indeed be strange were this the case.

It is contended, then, that to a mind unbiased; one without dogmatic preconceptions; one seeking only the truth, regardless of where

it may lead, or what the supposed consequences may be, that to such a mind the evidence is clear, crystal clear, and is entirely in favor of the uniformity of nature, entirely in favor of a single cause.

Only when attempts are made to reconcile determinism with various dogmatic assumptions, is the argument confused and obscured. Many great minds, clearly recognizing the irresistible logic of determinism, have made attempts to reconcile, to harmonize, the fixed, narrow and often unenlightened dogmatism of past ages, with the wider, progressive, more intelligent and more reverent concepts of the students and apostles of truth of more modern times. The attempts have failed and the only result has been an oversubtle, deeply involved, contorted, confused and obscure argument, in striking contrast with the natural, simple and clear exposition which characterizes truth.

It should always be clearly borne in mind, that to maintain the so-called "freedom of the will" involves the possibility of conceiving an action that is unrelated, that stands by itself, that is absolute; an act without an antecedent motive, one without a cause or reason. To a finite mind such a conception is impossible. Otherwise, we were not finite. But every intelligent man, in his right senses, knows that he

is. Our consciousness consists, simply, in recognizing a small part of the natural sequence of events. Our intellect is but "a link in the great movement of thought." And our decisions and our actions, whether involuntary or voluntary, whether conscious or unconscious, are simply the expressions of the existing correspondence and interaction. When this interaction is conscious we call the result "Will," when unconscious, we give it various other names.

All things, all beings, are but instruments or agents of the all-pervading energy. Whether this energy be in the form of molecular or molar motion in matter in general; or whether it be in the form of stimulation of a nerve center, resulting, in certain cases, in the recognition of adequate motive directing an intelligent being, the result is equally definite and sure, and there is in it all, "no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

## II

A subject closely related to the foregoing, is that of the relation of the emotions to mental activity.

A deliberative, volitional act involves perception, due consideration and appropriate action. While we can conceive of such a process as practically free from any marked emotion, yet

## 44 THE WHY OF THE WILL

it is certain, that every volitional act implies some degree of interest, and therefore, taking the word in its broadest sense, some degree of emotion. To say that the heart as well as the mind is involved in this process, is a common way of expressing this fact of subjective interest, as well as the co-relative fact that mental activities vary in the degree of calmness of deliberation.

Between the two extremes of a cool, quiet, phlegmatic state of mind, and one shaken by the most violent emotions, we find in actual life all gradations, innumerable steps of transition.

Strictly speaking, these conditions differ only in degree. And, if, in a similarly strictly scientific sense, it can perhaps be truly said that no deliberative act, no matter how well considered, is ideal or perfect, that is, is exactly adapted to its purpose, it must be clearly evident, that when the mind is disturbed by violent emotions this shortcoming is likely to be correspondingly increased.

That a proper consideration of a subject not only admits of, but even implies, a certain degree of emotion, evidencing interest, is believed to be true.

But it is even more apparent, that beyond this limited degree, the opposite is true.

That the emotions often effect even very

positive physical changes is fully and generally recognized. Volumes have been written on this subject. It has been shown that emotions may result in anæsthesia, hyperæsthesia and paræsthesia; may cause aberrations of the special senses; may bring about irregular and violent muscular contractions, or convulsions; and may lead to mental and muscular paralyses. The heart, the blood vessels, the bodily temperature, the iris, the intestines, the hair, the central nervous ganglions, the unborn child, are all subject to its occasional powerfully modifying influences.

If, then, the emotions are capable of affecting such positive physical changes of the various parts of the body, it follows, admitting the brain to be the organ of the mind, that corresponding changes or modifications of perception and reflection must result. If the brain, at its best, is not a perfect organ, and if the emotions are, occasionally, so disturbing, it is not strange that the aberrations of mind and the perversions of will, thus produced, should, at times, be decidedly serious; should, even, sometimes result in very positive forms of insanity. And these conditions have this in common with other forms of insanity, that the aberration is essentially a matter of degree. Some of these cases are difficult to grade and classify.

## 46 THE WHY OF THE WILL

In the words of Bain:

"The difficult case is what is called moral insanity, where there are impulses morbidly strong which can yet be, to some degree, counterworked by motives, or the apprehension of consequences. There is a shading-off here into the region of mere passionate impulse, such as a person counted perfectly sane may fall victim to."

And Wood, in his work on nervous diseases, says:

"Insanity is not a definite disease, but an abnormal state, varying indefinitely in intensity, separated by no tangible lines from sanity. . . . It is a mental weakness, and it would be as absurd to ask for a definite line, separating the physically weak from the physically strong, as to ask one separating the mentally weak from the mentally strong."

Of the classifications of insanity, he says that they are "arbitrary," and that "almost every grade of case exists in nature, uniting, by an unbroken series, the various symptom groups."

But there is another modification, in addition to that of mental aberration, which strong emotion imposes upon deliberative, volitional action. Time, as well as a healthy brain, is required in

forming just conclusions. The evil consequences arising from hasty, ill-considered actions while under the influence of emotions are proverbial.

But it is argued that "all this may be prevented by the exercise of self-control," and to a certain extent this is true, but this truth has its limitations. We all recognize the fact that the provocation occasionally becomes too great for the most self-controlled.

That the "worry, distractions and provocations incident to our condition may be in some instances overwhelming," is observed by Bain, and even courts and juries recognize this. This being admitted, it follows that such cases must be wanting, in some degree, in the element of responsibility—using this term in the more usual sense. And, thus, we come to the general question of responsibility.

The term responsibility is variously employed. We may speak of responsibility to physical laws. If one sits in a cold draught, if one eats or drinks excessively or becomes overheated, or greatly fatigued, or if one overapplies his mind, or worries, the consequences show themselves in impaired health and suffering. These consequences are natural, are involved in the transgression, and, therefore, in this sense, we are held accountable, answerable or responsible, for violations of the laws of health.

Very similar is what is sometimes called responsibility to oneself. We are subject to the inevitable consequences of our every thought and action. Every thought and action has its logical consequence, and in this sense we are absolutely accountable, answerable or responsible to ourselves; and incur the inevitable penalty or reward inherent in the action.

We also speak of legal responsibility, ethical responsibility, responsibility to our fellow-man or social responsibility. If all human laws were just, the terms legal and ethical, as used in this connection, would be practically synonymous. Unfortunately this is far from being the case.

Society, for its protection and integrity, assumes the right and the authority to enact laws, and to insist on their observance; and for any violation of these it imposes penalties. And, even, though we deny the "freedom of the will" this is reasonable. For it is clear, that the existence of penalties and rewards is a factor or motive in determining the actions of individuals. And so, when any particular transgression or crime is on the increase, we may infer that, perhaps, the penalty is insufficient; and the weight is increased until the balance is again on the right side. In this way we are held responsible to legal requirements.



If a person is insane *to the degree* that penalties do not appeal to his mind—have no deterring influence, Society no longer holds him responsible. The question is, how high shall the standards of self-control and mental soundness be placed? And, thus, we come to the conclusion, that emotions, with their mental and volitional consequences, including positive mental aberration; and responsibility to social laws are matters of degree. And the practical deduction is, that in society and in our laws we should recognize this. No longer should we simply say this man is sane or insane, no longer, he is responsible or irresponsible, but the verdict should be worded: “We find this individual sane or insane to such a degree, responsible or irresponsible to such a degree, that Society does or does not require his restraint and his treatment.”

So, also, in the case of emotional excitement the statement of fact should be worded, “he has or he has not exercised the self-control which Society at present requires of its members.” And in coming to a conclusion, wise men would take into consideration, so far as finite possibilities go, all the facts in each individual case: the heredity, early training, later influences, physical and mental characteristics, condition of health, habits, exciting provocation, etc.

This is the only method, which does not ignore, or do violence to immutable natural laws, the only method which does not do cruel injustice to humanity.

There remains for consideration the question of responsibility to the Creator, responsibility as involved in the relations of human beings to the Eternal. The responsibility already referred to, shown in the consequences of violations of the inexorable laws of nature, might be considered as coming under this head. Here, however, the penalty is inherent in the transgression. This is quite different, though, from the ordinary conceptions, which, assuming a form of moral responsibility aside from the inherent consequences, pictures an offended Deity, and dire future punishment at his hands.

According to the doctrine of determinism we act as we do because we and our environment are what they are. And if the Creator created both, it is His work and the result is His. We are but agents in His hands. Assuming a purpose in the universe, we serve as instruments toward the accomplishment of that purpose. To avoid transgressions and consequent suffering, we must learn to understand the laws of the universe, and to live in harmonious accord. We must "re-enact, as it were, for ourselves" the divine law, and repeat, so far as

is possible to finite beings, the transcendent act of will in which truth and goodness had their origin."

But it will be said that the doctrine of determinism, thus, does away with all morality, that it makes the universe dead, feelingless; and that it removes all incentive; that it means fatalism, in the sense that what is to be will be, and that, therefore, all personal activity is meaningless.

Before proceeding to a consideration of these questions, it should be observed that the real or supposed consequences of the acceptance of a proposition, bear no essential relation to its truth or falsity. No matter what the bearings of a fact or truth may be, no matter how disastrous the consequences may appear, this of itself does not affect the truth or falsity. But truth involves no real disaster; in fact, it is the only way to genuine and permanent harmony. Both history and commonsense teach this. It has been well said that "in a true system unity is produced by harmonizing apparent differences, and in a false system by ignoring differences."

A proposition so fundamental to our conception of our wide and varied relations in the universe as is that of determinism, should admit of some coherent and consistent scheme of sociology and of cosmology. And, as might be anticipated, there is no difficulty in showing that

## 52 THE WHY OF THE WILL

the conceptions involved in such words as effort, endeavor, voluntary and involuntary, incentive, development, good and bad, morality and immorality, continue to have real and definite meanings, although, some of them, somewhat different from those at present commonly accepted. Likewise the various emotions, such as gratitude, dislike, fear, sorrow, regret, love, faith, hope and charity have full play in this concept.

Whether our activities are foreordained or not makes no difference as to their efficiency or positive nature. Even though they be determined, and though they be but particular manifestations of the universal energy, still our individual efforts remain potent factors, in the development of the future; and the result will be just as exactly proportioned to the energy involved, as if, in some unexplained way, this activity were entirely independent of the force exhibited in the natural sequence of events. No matter how the state of mind which results in works comes about, the work will have its legitimate effect. And so, if one man is diligent and the other folds his arms and says, "Allah's will be done," the difference in the result will be quite apparent. The first will accomplish something, for which others may be willing to give in return; the second will starve if he con-

tinues in his foolishness and others do not come to his relief. Effort and endeavor will always obtain their natural and legitimate reward. That the result may be valuable, intelligence must of course co-operate. Whether it be fore-ordained that one shall work and another repose in idleness, does not make the result any different than if the difference came about in any other way. And the essentially interesting fact is, that so far from removing incentive, determinism permits the recognition of ability and of value which results in work.

If we recognize the benefit to be derived from work, no matter how this idea may have come to us, and if it becomes the predominant consideration, *this state of mind* results in our working. The antecedent in the form of a motive is there, and it matters not how it got there. It need scarcely be added that all this presupposes physical ability.

And not only can we distinguish between work and no work, and between little and more work, but we can also distinguish as to quality. No matter how the work comes about, its nature is not changed. Even though we are but agents in the hands of the Creator, but instruments of the universal energy, we may still distinguish between good and bad instruments, as well as between good and bad work.

Much has been written on the nature of goodness, and there has not always been full agreement as to what constitutes goodness and badness. Still it may be said, in a general way, that moral or ethical conceptions are based on the experience of the past. And it would, perhaps, not be difficult to show that this is also true of those which are assumed to be founded on the authority of special revelation. Agencies the result of whose operations are in harmony with the prevailing consensus are esteemed good, those in conflict therewith are condemned as bad.

And the concept of determinism in no way changes the matter. We may still speak of good and bad agencies and influences.

Looked at broadly, those agencies are good that promote enduring harmony and accord between ourselves and the rest of the universe; and those bad that cause or result in lasting discord, misery and suffering.

And, even, as believers in determinism, we may still dislike and fear agencies that are harmful; may still feel gratitude for benefits received, and regret for unhappy occurrences; may still love our friends, and mankind in general; may still experience the various emotions to which mankind has been subject.

Right here it may well be asked, since, accord-

ing to determinism, all acts are determined, what is the difference, if any, between a harmful act that is purely accidental, and unintentional, and one that is based upon deliberate, malevolent purpose? It is clear that the two are alike in that both are expressions of actual states of individuality and environment, and of their interaction; but they differ in that the second expresses, also, a state of individual character, or rather of want of character.

No matter what the state of the individual may be his interaction, conscious or unconscious, is definite and positive; and one may often reason from an act back to the character and circumstances which the act implies and expresses. That this reasoning may be correct and just, as to the character of an individual, in any particular, the circumstances,—the environment—must also be known, and must be carefully and exactly pondered and weighed; since it is neither the individual nor the environment alone, but the interaction of the two which determines the result.

Determinism, also, admits of regret for past occurrences and acts. The fact that an act, with its inevitable and inherent consequences, is determined, does not alter its quality, does not affect its resulting happiness or unhappiness. One may, therefore, deeply regret a certain act,

while still recognizing that it was a necessary resultant of the actual factors; the state of the individual and the nature of the circumstances. The recognition of one's misdeeds and regret therefore may become a potent factor in reformation.

Remorse, however, in the sense of implying a term, is not consistent with the conviction or guilt that was wilful, in the usual sense of the conception of determinism.

In judging ourselves and our fellowmen, two interesting facts come up for consideration,—namely, the essential self-interest of motives and the gregarious, social nature of man. Man has justly been called a gregarious or social animal. He is not happy when alone, he needs companionship; the fellow instinct is deeply implanted in his nature. And, therefore, normally, he can be really happy only when, at least fairly in harmony with his fellowmen. That the fellow feeling is strong in us has always been recognized. That “man is naturally a sociable animal” was remarked by Aristotle. Upon this fellow instinct, as refined and specialized in love, depends the very continuance of the race. This instinct is inherent in our very being, is an ultimate fact of our being.

From considerations such as the foregoing, many have concluded that man possesses the in-



stinct of altruism. But upon careful examination, it seems clear that pure altruism, in the ordinary sense, does not exist. The unity of the universe is again seen in the fact, that strictly speaking, all motives have a single common origin, and are based on self-interest, real or supposed. It is impossible to conceive of a motive that is not one of interest, and interest, in the present sense, is self-interest. As used here, motives and self-interest are synonymous. To say that one's interests are purely altruistic is a contradiction of terms,—is self-contradictory. "All actions of will are but forms of the self-assertive tendency and, thus, one with our very being."

But while maintaining all this, we need not overlook the fact, that the two extremes:—the narrowest, most shortsighted selfishness, and that wider, higher recognition of self-interest, which almost attains to pure unselfishness, are as far apart, and as opposite, as the antipodes. The latter, taking into account, in the fullest sense, our relation to mankind, while still a self-interest, recognizes that the highest and most enduring self-interest is that which has thought and consideration, not alone for mankind, but for all living, sentient creatures. It is by virtue of this recognition of self-interest, that we come to have an interest in all creatures, in all

life, in all energy, in the whole universe. And it is the practical application of this truth that gives the highest and most enduring pleasure. By observing a proper "balance of self-regarding and social affections" we make coincide our pleasure, with what is generally called our sense of duty to others. It is in this sense, that it has been said that the "happiness of man is the criterion of virtue once removed."

On this subject Herbert Spencer says:

"Subjectively considered, then, the conciliation of egoism and altruism will eventually become such that though the altruistic pleasure, as being a part of the consciousness of one who experiences it, can never be other than egoistic, it will not be consciously egoistic."

Determinism not alone admits the conception and the practice of the higher qualities, but it strengthens them. Recognizing, in ourselves, as in our fellow beings, that our shortcomings are not, in the ordinary sense, wilful, but are inherent in our natures and in the, at times, untoward influences of our environment; that they are due to weaknesses, comparable to the physical weaknesses of ill health; and appreciating also the unhappiness which they always sooner or later entail, one naturally has a feeling, not, as is now too often the case, of scarcely unmixed

repulsion and abhorrence, with perhaps cruel social condemnation and ostracism, but rather of sorrow, of sympathy and of charity. And there follows the further recognition, that the corrective measures called for by the condition of sin and crime, are not simply penalties and restraint and neglect, but rather true moral education, assistance and fellow feeling.

In the many cases where the body, also, is at fault, where the appetites and passions are abnormal, also the body needs careful attention. Physicians are learning, more and more, to recognize in unhealthy bodily states the causes of many perverted habits. This is especially true, for example, of alcoholism.

The understanding of what constitutes true happiness, and the knowledge of how to gain and to maintain it, can be relied upon, in due time, to guide and control the masses, for the "greater good" is the desideratum of all. "We needs must love the highest when we see it."

The ancients were not unmindful of this truth. Socrates recognized it when he identified knowledge with virtue. And Plato recognized the harmony of the soul in the "subordination of the impulsive elements to reason." The wise have always recognized that "vicious pleasures are not true pleasures."

The argument is often advanced, that in de-

nying our moral responsibility to the Creator, and in thus removing the fear of punishment, both here and hereafter, all restraint is taken away, and sin and wickedness are given full rule and empire. As has been pointed out, the punishment of sin is involved in the act, is inherent. Violations of the laws of health bring sooner or later their sure result. Violations of the moral or ethical laws, when these laws are just, and are really based on the experience of mankind, bring likewise their sure results in the recurrence of the unhappy consequences, which, in past ages, taught our ancestors. Sin is a hard, and, apparently, at times, a cruel teacher in the school of experience.

In proportion as we learn to understand the true nature of genuine ethical laws, and the inevitable consequences of their violation, this recognition, this wisdom, will become a factor ever tending to discourage and lessen wrong-doing, ever working for righteousness. Those who live in nearer accord may be looked upon as having reached a higher plane, as having attained so much nearer the ideal. And their happiness is their adequate reward.

The wise man is he who has learned, *as all must learn*, that permanent happiness is only attainable by being in accord with certain rules which we call natural, physical and moral laws.

There have been and there, doubtless will continue to be, ebbs and flows in the moral progress of the world, but truth can always be relied upon for good. And determinism, rightly and fully understood, will be found to bring us nearer to nature, and nearer to nature's God. It may be objected, by those believing in an omnipotent and benevolent Creator, that it is a strange and an unworthy conception of the Creator, to assert, or to imply, that he makes use of instruments of evil. But there is no denying that sin exists; that, as yet, all is not perfect harmony; that the millenium has not arrived. It has often been suggested, that the explanation is to be found in the need of trial to develop character. Sin means transgression, means human imperfection. The inevitable consequences of transgressions, when wisely interpreted, must result in development, and tend toward perfection. It is not sin, but its consequences which develop character and wisdom.

A recent writer, in an attempt to explain the existence of pain and suffering in the animal world, feeling himself forced to choose, between the omnipotence and the benevolence of the Creator has based a scheme of Cosmology upon the concept of limited power, thus attempting an explanation of the world's development by slow and halting steps. These and many similar

## 62 THE WHY OF THE WILL

questions are beyond finite understanding and determination.

The possible use of pain and suffering is well suggested in the following lines:

“The dark brown mould’s upturned  
By the sharp pointed plow —  
And I’ve a lesson learned.

My life is but a field,  
Stretched out beneath God’s sky  
Some harvest rich to yield.

Where grows the golden grain?  
Where faith? Where sympathy?  
In a furrow cut by pain.”

We can only watch the course of temporal events, and in an unbiased, honest, fearless, truth-seeking and reverent spirit deduce what appear to be the lessons taught.

Determinism is based on no fixed and antiquated creed, but rests on a recognition and study of the natural course and sequence of events. As this unfolds and develops, and becomes better understood, so, also, will scientific and religious belief expand. The progress of a creed thus founded is synchronous and parallel with the advance of knowledge.

To the “Scriptures” of the nations we must add the scriptures of the Universe, whose leaves

innumerable are ever unfolding, ever presenting new and greater truths, ever exciting to wider and nobler conceptions and participations.

The lessons of the Universe, with especial regard for those of humanity, must be studied with the earnestness and single-mindedness of the discoverer and lover of truth. As true knowledge increases so will the recognition of the limitations of our knowledge—actual and potential;—and with it intellectual modesty and reverence. In these we shall find the requisites and the assurances of true progress, material and spiritual, moral and religious. For while at any given moment human action is fixed and determined, yet both we and our environment are constantly changing. That this change may be progressive, we need only increase our knowledge and wisdom, and, profiting by experience, need only rise from our dead selves to our higher selves.

The history of the world shows how unreliable and conflicting, is a morality based upon assumed authority. The variances of conventionalities are notorious. That which in one country or age is esteemed as right, in another place or time is condemned as wrong. Determinism places morality on the sound basis of reason and intelligence; and we can surely recognize in the steady increase of true intelli-

## 64 THE WHY OF THE WILL

gence, paralleled by the growth of real morality, as seen in the history of mankind, the germ and the assurance of continued development towards perfection.

With personal development will come better understanding and better control of our physical condition and of our general environment. We shall learn to establish a better harmony between ourselves, our fellow beings and the universe generally. Our conceptions of fellow relationship will become more just, and our actions correspondingly more considerate.

Of the belief in determinism we can confidently say, that it is thinkable, is consistent and is elevating. Through it we recognize ourselves as included in the universal energy, its intellectual agents, working out its destiny,—we have faith to say, its beneficent purpose.

“ Yet I doubt not through the ages one increasing purpose runs.

And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the sun.”

As our intelligence increases, our vision widens, deepens, our judgment of ourselves and of others becomes more just, and we incline to charity.

Recognizing the complexity of human nature and its infinite relations, we no longer judge



rash and cruel judgment. No matter how serious the sickness of sin, we confidently hope for, and have abiding faith in ultimate restoration; if not in this world then in some other. We frown on those who by word and deed discourage the sick one; and we recognize as noble and Christlike benefactors those who, never weary in the work of hopeful encouragement and wise support, have faith in the final outcome, believing that in the end all will be well.

“Before beginning and without end,  
 As space eternal and as surety sure,  
 Is fixed a Power divine which moves to good,  
 Only its laws endure . . . . .

Such is the Law which moves to righteousness,  
 Which none at last can turn aside or stay,  
 The heart of it is Love, the end of it is Peace  
 And consummation sweet. Obey.”

As knowledge and wisdom increase, as our eyes are opened more fully to the eternal verities, as we more fully realize the marvellous wonders of the universe, and as we shall be in better accord, we may finally come to recognize that “our consciousness of God, is only part of God’s consciousness of himself, all bodies modes of infinite extension, all souls modes of infinite thought.”

And, as we see more clearly, and feel more vividly that "we are inherent parts of its glorious unity, we may hope to reach that ultimate real principle of knowledge and being without which there can be no rest for reason, or unity in the universe."











